



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1940.

REPORTS WILDLIFE BENEFITS FROM FEDERAL AID PROGRAM

Only two years have passed since the Pittman-Robertson Act became law, but its influence on conservation is already being felt in no small measure, said Albert M. Day, of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, in addressing the Western Association of Fish and Game Commissioners at their annual meeting held in Seattle, Washington, August 22 and 23.

Mr. Day, who is chief of the Service's Division of Federal Aid to the States, pointed out that funds provided by the Pittman-Robertson Act have made it possible for State Game departments to undertake long needed work that previously could not be properly financed. The Act provides for Federal payment of 75 percent of the costs of wildlife restoration projects approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service and carried on by participating States in accordance with Federal standards. The Federal excise tax on arms and ammunition finances the program.

Outlining three fundamentals of game management, Mr. Day said that Federal aid funds were being used for two of these, obtaining accurate data on wildlife and providing suitable breeding grounds, refuges, and adequate food and cover. The third factor, dealing with the actual administration of wildlife, he said, is a function of the State game departments which cannot be financed from Federal funds. It includes setting hunting seasons and bag limits and otherwise regulating the annual take of game.

This administrative responsibility, he emphasized, however, cannot be overlooked if the States are to derive the most benefit from the expenditure of funds for research and acquisition and development of lands. "The crop," he said, "must be harvested in such a way that there remains an ample breeding stock for the following year."

Forty-four of the forty-eight States, Mr. Day reported, have assented to the provisions of the Pittman-Robertson Act, and forty-three of them have active programs under way. Louisiana has just recently passed the necessary assent legislation and is now planning a program to make use of the funds. Montana, Nevada, Florida, and Georgia are the only ineligible States at the present time.

The Act became effective on July 1, 1938, and Congress provided \$1,000,000 to get work under way that year. On July 1, 1939, the appropriation was increased to \$1,500,000, and for the period beginning July 1, 1940, an appropriation of \$2,500,000 was made available. Each appropriation is available for a two-year period, giving the States considerable leeway in planning and executing activities.

"Progress seemed a bit slow at first," said Mr. Day, "but now that an organization is being built throughout the country to take care of the increased volume of work, activities are progressing at a much faster pace."

During the first year, 58 projects calling for an expenditure of \$343,932 were approved from 31 States; the second year, 237 projects were approved for 43 States, involving an expenditure of \$2,082,735. The unexpended funds on June 30, 1939, plus the appropriation for 1940, together with the States' 25 percent proportionate contribution, made \$2,594,757 available during the last fiscal year. Projects have been approved which obligate over 80 percent of this sum, and the States still have another year to spend the 1940 money.

"This," Day declared, "certainly discloses that the funds are being put to good use, and that the State game departments are developing their programs to keep pace with appropriations."

Of the 237 projects approved last year, 51 were for the acquisition of lands and waters, at an estimated cost of \$487,000; 101 were for the development of areas to improve wildlife conditions, at a cost of \$714,000; and 85 provided for investigations into problems of wildlife management, at a cost of \$881,000.